

The Honourable Michael Kirby AC CMG

The **Honourable Michael Kirby AC CMG** was awarded the University of New England's Honorary Doctor of Letters (honoris causa) degree at the graduation ceremony on 5 May 2026 for his remarkable contributions to the law, human rights, global justice and higher education. When Justice Kirby retired from the High Court of Australia on 2 February 2009, he was Australia's longest serving judge. First appointed in 1975 as Deputy President of the Australian Conciliation & Arbitration Commission, he became inaugural Chairman of the Australian Law Reform Commission (1975–84), then served as a Judge of the Federal Court of Australia, President of the New South Wales Court of Appeal (1984–96), and was appointed to the High Court in 1996, twice acting as Chief Justice. Beyond the bench, his service has been extraordinary: Chancellor of Macquarie University (1984–93); President of the International Commission of Jurists (1995–98); UN Special Representative for Human Rights in Cambodia (1993–96); Chair of the UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights Violations in North Korea (2013–14); and Co-Chair of the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute (2018–). He was awarded the Gruber Justice Prize in 2010 and Japan's Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star in 2017.

Justice Kirby has strong links to UNE, and 2026 marks the 50th anniversary of his first address to UNE graduands — his first graduation address following his judicial appointment and appointment as inaugural Chairman of the Australian Law Reform Commission.

After conferral of his Honorary Doctor of Letters, Justice Kirby addressed new UNE graduates as the Occasional Speaker for the graduation ceremony on 5 May 2026. Justice Kirby also gave a public lecture that afternoon at a joint event organised by the School of Law and the Law Students' Society.



It was an absolute honour and privilege to host Justice Kirby and his partner Johan van Vlotten at UNE in Armidale. Justice Kirby's two public lectures were, as usual, inspirational — drawing on his extensive career in the law, human rights advocacy and public service, and encouraging aspiring legal professionals to approach the law not only as a profession but as a vehicle for justice, integrity and social responsibility. We are so proud of this longstanding, close relationship with a living treasure and legal giant.

The link to Justice Kirby's 5 May afternoon public lecture is available here: <https://echo360.net.au/media/3d3ba66b-f29c-4282-a88c-23aafb69bd1c/public>

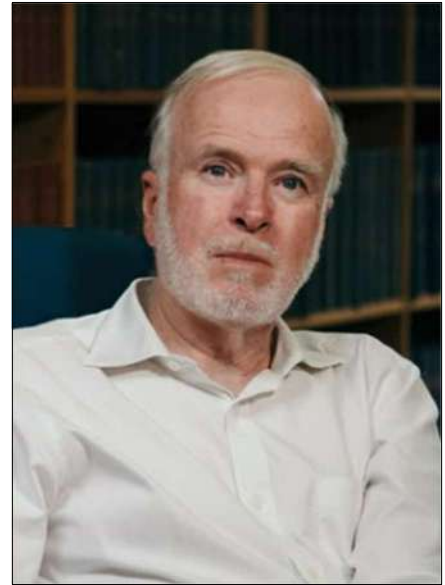




Staff News

Emeritus Professor Paul Martin

Professor Paul Martin has been recognised for his twenty-year leadership as Director of the Australian Centre for Agriculture and Law (AgLaw), where he pioneered non-doctrinal legal research that transformed rural governance and environmental policy into dynamic tools for real-world impact. With more than 250 scholarly publications and leadership across two Cooperative Research Centres, his work has consistently championed the social fabric of regional communities - bridging the gap between statutory law and practical stewardship for farmers and landscapes. Beyond his global influence in the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Professor Martin is celebrated as a compassionate mentor to over thirty doctoral candidates and a dedicated advocate for the protection of Indigenous knowledge, leaving an enduring legacy of integrity and collegial excellence at the University of New England.



2025-2026 Trimester 3 Unit Commendations

UNE acknowledges excellence and effectiveness in teaching through its Unit Commendation process, with commendations issued to units with an Overall Satisfaction Index of 4.5 or above (out of 5.0) in UNE's Unit Evaluation Survey. The units listed below were identified as Highly Commendable in Trimester Three 2025, with the respective Unit Coordinators receiving a Commendation in recognition of their significant contribution and involvement in the overall success of the units.

Unit Coordinator & teaching team	Unit code and name and offering
Lauren Triantafillopoulos	LSU100: Introduction to Legal Studies (External)
Ben Hingley	LAW100: Foundations of Law (External)
Fiona Burns	LAW102: Legal Professional Skills (External)
Patrick Graham	LAW172: Contract Law (External)
Igor Mescher	LAW313: Evidence and Proof (External)
Cameron Moore and Marina William	LAW318: Law of the Sea (External)
Patrick Graham and Ben Hingley	LAW346: Law and Crisis: The Use of Emergency Powers (External)
Ottavio Quirico	LAW361: International Law (External)
Karen Conte and Guy Mazzella	LAW370: Family Law (External)
Sharl Marimuthu	LAW397: Global Food Security Law and Policy (External)

UNE Staff Awards: nominations from the School of Law

Research Collaboration Leadership:

Associate Professor Mia Rahim

Eligible for academic or professional staff who demonstrate leadership in bringing together durable multidisciplinary research teams, projects or initiatives with a sustained and measurable positive outcome.



Research Impact and Effectiveness:

Dr Andrew Lawson

Eligible for academic and professional staff – demonstrated contribution to research that makes a sustained positive contribution to the University's research endeavour (significantly enhancing the research system), or the research field (changing its direction), or the economic/social sector in terms of new products or services derived from your research.



Together We Rise Award:

Dr Laura Smith-Khan

Recognises staff who embody all four UNE Values—**Be Kind** through advancing equity and belonging, **Be Bold** in implementing innovative programs for cultural change, **Be Connected** in building bridges across diverse communities, and **Be Accountable** for systemic progress. This award celebrates individuals who advance diversity, equity and inclusion to create a safe, enjoyable and inclusive workplace where staff and students from all backgrounds feel a genuine sense of belonging. Their work is fundamental to our foundational principle of ensuring UNE is a safe environment – physically, psychosocially, and culturally – and directly supports our commitment to moving from consultation to accountability in creating safe, inclusive communities where all can thrive.

Their work directly supports UNE's commitment to moving from consultation to accountability in creating safe, inclusive communities where all can thrive, including but not limited to:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples;
- women in senior roles;
- women in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine (STEMM) disciplines;
- culturally and linguistically diverse people;
- lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, and asexual/aromantic (LGBTQIA+) people;
- people with disability; and
- people from low socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds



Unsung Hero Award:

Belinda Eastgate

Dr Kip Werren

Recognises staff who embody all four UNE Values, particularly **Be Kind** through selfless contribution, **Be Accountable** for operational excellence, **Be Connected** to the integrated functioning of UNE, and **Be Bold** in their commitment. This award celebrates individuals who consistently go above and beyond their duties, making significant contributions to UNE's success through efforts that may not be immediately visible but are crucial to smooth operations, quality services, and positive student experience. Their work exemplifies the collaborative, unified culture essential to achieving our Strategic Plan and delivering on our Purpose.



Rising Star Award:

Claudia Barbosa

Recognises emerging staff who embody all four UNE Values and demonstrate exceptional promise, dedication, and potential. These individuals show **Be Bold** through willingness to take on challenges, **Be Connected** through engagement across multiple stakeholders and teams, **Be Accountable** through exceptional achievement, and **Be Kind** through outstanding service. This award celebrates those making valuable contributions to UNE's success and represents investment in the emerging leadership and talent essential to delivering our Strategic Plan and creating a thriving university culture.



Autumn Graduation

UNE's Autumn Graduation Ceremony for the School of Law and the UNE Business School was held on Tuesday 5 May 2026. More than 160 students graduated with degrees in Law and/or Business.

Among the Law graduates who attended the ceremony in Armidale was one PhD graduate, three Master of Laws graduates, five Bachelor of Laws (Honours) graduates, 60 Bachelor of Laws graduates, twelve combined Law degree graduates, one Advanced Diploma in Paralegal Studies graduate, two Diploma in Legal Studies graduates, and two Diploma in Paralegal Studies graduates. The Honourable Michael Kirby AC CMG was the Occasional Address Speaker for the 5 May graduation ceremony in Armidale.

The link to the recording of the full graduation ceremony is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/live/rSZHux0TKlo?si=E7EP1j4IXnixuDVR>



Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) graduates

Dr Rukiya Stein graduated with her PhD on 5 May 2026.

Title of the thesis: Intermediaries: Enabling Adults with Disabilities to 'Tell their Story' in the Australian Criminal Justice Process.

Australia's legal framework presents significant obstacles for adults with cognitive and communication-based disabilities in criminal proceedings. Intermediaries facilitate communication between vulnerable witnesses or defendants and legal practitioners, enabling clearer, more accurate evidence. Although some Australian jurisdictions have implemented intermediary schemes, legislative gaps exclude many vulnerable adults—particularly defendants—from accessing this support, creating inequitable access to justice. This project evaluates intermediary impact on an autistic defendant through legal, case study, and discourse analysis. Findings confirm that intermediaries positively influence lawyer questioning and evidence quality, particularly during cross-examination. The research proposes nationally unified legislation, standardised training, and a broader cultural shift recognising intermediaries as essential to achieving meaningful participation and equitable justice for all.

Supervisors: Dr Laura Smith-Khan and Associate Professor Siva Barathi (Sharl) Marimuthu.



Dr Elham Ghaffarian (Eli) has been awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and will graduate in October 2026

Elham's thesis, *Green IP: The role of Intellectual Property Rights in Agricultural Sustainability*, examines the role of intellectual property law—particularly a national patent system—in supporting access to *green technologies* relevant to agricultural sustainability. Using the Iranian context, the thesis explores how legal frameworks can better support innovation and diffusion of technologies such as smart irrigation systems, addressing pressures on national water resources and the depletion of Lake Urmia and associated wetlands. The thesis ultimately proposes integrating a Green Patent Scheme into Iran's national intellectual property system.



Supervisors: Professor Mark Perry, Associate Professor Mia Rahim, and Associate Professor Siva Barathi (Sharl) Marimuthu.

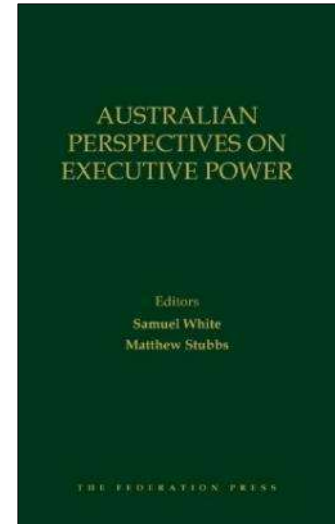
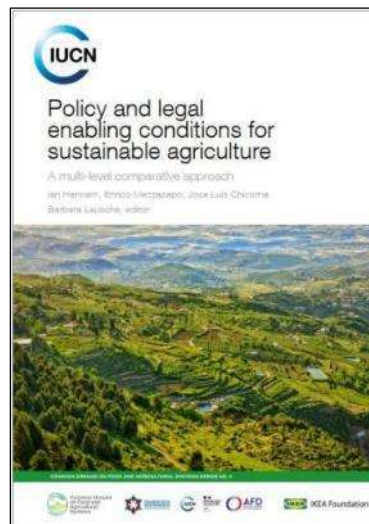
Publications

Books

Paul Akon and Fiona Burns, *Alternative Dispute Resolution: A Custom Publication for the School of Law, University of New England* (LexisNexis, 3rd ed, 2026).

Ian Hannam et al (eds) (Adjunct Associate Professor, AgLaw Research Hub), *Policy and Legal Enabling Conditions for Sustainable Agriculture: A Multilevel Comparative Approach* (IUCN, 2026) 176pp.

Samuel White (Adjunct Associate Professor) and **Matthew Stubbs** (eds), *Australian Perspectives on Executive Power* (Federation Press, 2026).



Book Chapters

Ian Hannam (Adjunct Associate Professor, AgLaw Research Hub), 'Degrading the Soil: An Act of Ecocide?', in Harald Ginzky et al (eds), *International Yearbook of Soil Law and Policy* (Springer 2025) https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-032-03251-5_11

Ian Hannam (Adjunct Associate Professor, AgLaw Research Hub), 'Law and Policy, and Sustainable Agriculture', in Harald Ginzky et al (eds), *International Yearbook of Soil Law and Policy 2025* (Springer 2025) 183-222; https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-032-03251-5_8

Ian Hannam (Adjunct Associate Professor, AgLaw Research Hub), (2026) 'Regulation and Desertification,' in Williamson et al (eds), *Research Handbook on Environmental Regulation* (Edward Elgar Publishing 2026) 344-407.

Cameron Moore, 'The Executive Power During a 21st Century Conflict' in Samuel White and Matthew Stubbs (eds), *Australian Perspectives on Executive Power* (Federation Press, 2026).

Laura Smith-Khan, 'Intercultural Communication in Migration Law Education' in Tatiana Grieshofer and Kate Haworth (eds), *Language and Justice: Communication in Legal Practice* (Cambridge University Press, 2026) 217-231.

Articles (refereed and non-refereed)

Sue Field (Adjunct Professor) 'Practising with Care: Anticipating Legal Tangles in the New Aged Care System' *Law Society Journal* (online, November 7 2025) <https://lsj.com.au/articles/practising-with-care-anticipating-legal-tangles-in-the-new-aged-care-system/>

Edward Musole (PhD candidate), 'Embedding Ubuntu and Indigenous Business Insights in Zambia: Advancing a Neuro-Responsible Governance Framework for the Global South' (2026) 5(1) *International Journal of Advanced Business Studies* 62-78.

Grants and Funding

Armidale Youth Koori Court Project has successfully secured funding for two projects - receiving a total of \$15,000. The funding will support the continued development and delivery of the Armidale Youth Koori Court Project and its work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the Armidale region.

Allan Ruto (PhD candidate) has received \$10,000 funding through the NSW Decarbonisation Innovation Hub (NDIH) Land and Primary Industries Network Decarbonisation PhD Top-up Program. Allan attracted this top-up scholarship funding to support research contributing to decarbonisation and innovation within the land and primary industries sector.

Patricia Vagg (PhD candidate) was awarded a travel grant to attend the Law and Society Association of Australia and New (LSAANZ) Conference in New Zealand. For further information, see: <https://www.lsaanz.org/conferences>

Patricia Vagg (PhD candidate) was awarded a bursary for the Socio-Legal Studies Association (SLSA) Annual Conference 2026. For further information, see: <https://www.slsa.ac.uk/conference>

Conferences, Presentations, Public Lectures, Seminars, Symposia and Workshops

Paul Akon 'Go to the Bush, Young Lawyer' presentation at the UNE Law Students' Society Conference on Sunday 3 May 2026, Armidale.

Sue Field (Adjunct Professor) invited presenter, *Law Society of NSW Elder Law Intensive*, February 2026.

Sue Field (Adjunct Professor) invited presenter, *College of Law Webinar on Legal Issues Affecting Older People*, March 2026.

Sue Field (Adjunct Professor), invited presenter, *College of Law Pre-recorded Professional Development Session on Legal Issues Affecting Older People*, March 2026.

Sue Field (Adjunct Professor) invited speaker, *Law Society of NSW Specialist Accreditation Conference*, International Convention & Exhibition Centre, Sydney 28-29 August 2026.

Sue Field (Adjunct Professor), invited presenter, *Law Society of NSW Specialist Accreditation Conference*, August 2026 (presentation on the Aged Care Act and the Retirement Village Regulation).

Warwick Giblin, (Adjunct Professor), 'Renewable Energy 101: What Is Being Delivered in NSW's First Renewable Energy Zone?', presentation to the Royal Society of New South Wales, 4 December 2025. Video link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=njd_NsfacYA

Warwick Giblin (Adjunct Professor), 'CWO REZ: Learnings for Hosts, Local Government and Community', presentation at *PIA NSW Northern Event: Planning in Renewable Energy Zones*, 8 May 2026.

Ian Hannam (Adjunct Associate Professor, AgLaw Research Hub), 'Legal and Policy Insights', presentation at the *Webinar on Policy and Legal Enabling Conditions for Sustainable Agriculture*, organised by the Food and Agriculture Systems Team, IUCN, Geneva, 4 May 2026, launching *Policy and Legal Enabling Conditions for Sustainable Agriculture: A Multilevel Comparative Approach*. <https://engage.iucn.org/event/launch-policy-and-legal-enabling-conditions-sustainable-agriculture>

Professor Mark Perry 'AI Ethics and Governance', presentation at the *New England North West Future Technology Forum 2026*, Inverell, 28 May 2026. For further information see: <https://www.netimes.com.au/2026/05/27/technology-trust-and-transformation-business-nsw-and-telstra-bring-future-tech-forum-to-inverell-on-thursday>

The Future Tech Forum brought together business, government, education and industry leaders to discuss the impact of technology and artificial intelligence on regional economies. The regional-focused event, delivered by Business NSW New England North West with major partner Telstra and event partner Inverell Chamber of Commerce and Industry, centred on the theme *Technology, Trust & Transformation in Regional Economies*.



Dr Wellett Potter, 'From Rainbow Brite to Care-a-Lot: Children's Play, Intellectual Property and the Toyetic Worlds of the 1980s', paper presented online at the *19th Conference of the Popular Culture Research Network (PopCRN): Child's Play in Popular Culture: History, Representations and Consumption*, 1 May 2026. The paper examined how 1980s 'toyetic media' reframed toys as strategic drivers of transmedia franchises designed for ongoing licensing. Drawing on *Rainbow Brite*, *Care Bears* and *Strawberry Shortcake*, it explored how intellectual property and licensing shaped children's play within corporate narrative worlds, and how this commodification model continues through nostalgia markets, anniversary releases and 'kidult' consumption.



Professor Ottavio Quirico, delivered a presentation on 'Nuclear Threats and the Limits of International Law', *European University Institute Max Weber Annual Conference*, 11 June 2026.

Dr Laura Smith-Khan delivered an online presentation, entitled 'Challenging beliefs about communication in refugee credibility assessments', for the Bangladesh Centre for Refugee Law Studies 29 April 2026. The BCRLS is a new organisation in Bangladesh led by an emerging generation of refugee law scholars.

Dr Laura Smith-Khan delivered the opening address, 'Legal literacy in linguistic diversity: Improving migrants' knowledge of the law' for the IV International Conference on Legal Language and Communication, Centro de Estudios Garrigues Business and Law School, Madrid, Spain, on 5 June 2026, presenting online, for Spanish law academics, lawyers and judges.

Patricia Vagg (PhD candidate) 'Justice of Geography', paper presented at the Law and Society Association of Australia and New Zealand Conference, Ōtautahi Christchurch, New Zealand, 2025. The presentation conceptualised access to legal services and justice in remote and very remote western New South Wales, examining the impact of geography on access to justice and legal service delivery.

Patricia Vagg (PhD candidate) paper presented in the *Social Class and the Law* panel session at the Socio-Legal Studies Association Annual Conference, March 2026. The presentation amplified the voices of people living in remote and very remote western New South Wales, using a storytelling methodology to explore experiences of legal need and the challenges of accessing legal services and justice from a distance. For further information see: <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/collaborate/events/slsa>.

Patricia Vagg (PhD candidate) poster presentation at the Socio-Legal Studies Association Annual Conference, March 2026. The poster used direct participant quotations to illustrate the experiences of people seeking legal assistance in western New South Wales and provided an overview of the research methodology underpinning the study. For further information see: <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/collaborate/events/slsa>.

Voices from a Distance: Access to Legal Services and Justice in Remote and Very Remote NSW Australia



Western NSW

- 42% of NSW land area
- 0.6% of NSW population
- large travel distances
- extremes of climate
- some areas have unreliable internet, phone or electricity
- strong sense of community and place



Data Collection

- residents of western NSW
- lawyers and judicial officers
- conversational interviews

Access to Justice in Western NSW

- "You explain yourself a lot when you live out here."
- "People can understand the words I'm saying, but they can't really imagine what it means."
- "After accepting the job the lawyer looked on the map. They looked on the map for the first time, and then they realised it's 1,100km from Sydney."
- "I travelled for ten hours, five hours each way, for a court mention that took a few minutes."
- "Not everyone out here has a birth certificate. The government lawyers helped people in the smaller towns apply for birth certificates."
- "It can be intimidating, to walk into the outreach clinic, not knowing who you're going to meet, or who's there to help."
- "If we can get help from people who understand what it's like out here, then we're not at a disadvantage compared with city people."

Storytelling Method

- composite narratives
- protect anonymity
- real life experiences

References

- Emilia Michalska and Wilkonia Wlasiuk, 'Narrative-Thinking and Storytelling in Legal Communication' (2023) 8(1) *Journal of International Legal Communication* 96
- Michelle Lim, 'Fiction as Legal Method—Imagining with the More-than-Human to Awaken Our Plural Selves' (2021) 33(3) *Journal of Environmental Law* 501



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This research was supported by the Commonwealth through an Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship [DOI: <https://doi.org/10.82133/C42F-K220>].

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AgLaw Research Hub

Patricia Vagg (PhD candidate) *Accompanying Video Presentation*, Socio-Legal Studies Association Annual Conference, 2026. Produced a three-minute video to accompany her poster presentation, combining aural and visual methods to illustrate the effort required to access legal services in remote and very remote New South Wales. The video highlights the challenges of distance, service availability and access to justice experienced by people living in regional and remote communities. For further information see: <https://youtu.be/FpY33aaVIMs>

Patricia Vagg (PhD candidate) presentation at the *UNE Law Students' Society Conference*, Armidale, 2026. Drawing on more than 20 years' experience as a solicitor in central New South Wales, Patricia spoke about regional legal practice and the realities of living and working in remote and very remote communities, including far western New South Wales. She also discussed her inaugural Fellowship with the Law and Justice Foundation of New South Wales, encouraging UNE law students to apply for the program. The Fellowship enables participants to investigate a legal or justice issue in New South Wales with mentorship from Foundation researchers and to produce a publication aimed at informing policy, law reform, professional practice or public debate. Fellows present their work at the Foundation's annual Justice Forum in Sydney, with final publications made publicly available through the Foundation.



Research Impact and Engagement

Sue Field (Adjunct Professor) has provided the definitions associated with the legal issues affecting older people for the newly release 7th edition of the LexisNexis Legal Dictionary.

Sue Field (Adjunct Professor) has been appointed to the Law Society of NSW Advisory Committee for the new Elder Law speciality.

Dr Wellett Potter became a signatory to the [Pro-Human AI Declaration](#), which calls for artificial intelligence to serve humanity rather than replace it. The declaration cautions against a 'race to replace' humans in creative, caring and decision-making roles, and instead advocates for trustworthy and controllable AI tools that amplify human potential, protect dignity and liberty, strengthen families and communities, and ensure that those who wield technological power remain accountable to human values and human flourishing.

Dr Wellett Potter has undertaken peer review for the *M/C Journal*. This work forms part of the discipline's quality assurance process, supporting the publication's rigorous and original scholarship. Wellett engaged in providing confidential, constructive feedback to the editors and authors on matters such as the article's contribution to knowledge, clarity of argument, engagement with relevant literature, and overall coherence, as well as recommendations regarding suitability for publication.

Dr Wellett Potter recently served as a peer reviewer for the *International Journal of Disney Studies*, providing a confidential expert assessment on a submitted manuscript. This supports the journal's editorial decision-making and contributes to the rigour and quality assurance of interdisciplinary scholarship at the intersection of media, culture and law.

Dr Wellett Potter was mentioned in *The Conversation Australia and New Zealand Impact Report* (January–March 2026), which highlighted how academic commentary can inform public policy debate. The report noted that, during Federal Parliament’s debate on the *Copyright Amendment Bill*, the Honourable Michael McCormack MP referenced Dr Potter (University of New England) alongside other *The Conversation* authors in relation to key questions raised about AI-generated content, copyright ownership and whether major legal settlements will fairly benefit authors. The report also recorded Mr McCormack’s endorsement of *The Conversation* as a trusted source of information, underscoring the policy relevance and broader public impact of Dr Potter’s scholarship on copyright and generative AI.

Dr Wellett Potter has had her public scholarship on AI deepfakes and identity protection cited in a NSW Parliamentary Research Service paper titled *Political Deepfakes and the New Laws in NSW* (Roth and Gotsis, Research Paper No. 2026-02, April 2026). The paper summarises NSW’s new electoral offences targeting digitally generated electoral material and considers associated constitutional issues and legal remedies. The citation of Dr Potter’s article reflects UNE Law School’s contribution to contemporary policy discussions on safeguarding democratic integrity and protecting individuals and politicians from misuse of digital likeness.

Dr Wellett Potter has signed a book contract with Vernon Press (US) for a forthcoming monograph in 2027 titled ‘*Witnessing Synthetic Identity: Generative AI and the Regulation of Unauthorised Digital Likeness*’. The book will develop the concept of ‘synthetic witnessing’ to describe how generative AI systems can capture, store and synthesise a person’s image, voice and likeness without authorisation, producing representations that can be rapidly disseminated across platforms, media and markets. It will analyse the current Australian legal position and identify key doctrinal gaps. The monograph will also draw on comparative US law to inform practical options for Australian reform.

Dr Laura Smith-Khan has been appointed as co-Editor-in-Chief of the *Australian Journal of Human Rights* (UNSW), commencing in late June 2026.

Dr Laura Smith-Khan has been invited by the Department of Home Affairs to participate in a consultation session on the English language requirements for Registered Migration Agent (RMA) registration. DHA is currently working with an external specialist to review the knowledge requirements for RMA registration. This work will continue through 2026 and will inform consideration of future updates to the Occupational Competency Standards (OCS).

Media

Associate Professor Guy Charlton, ‘[A landmark US ruling on birthright citizenship is coming. What does NZ law say](#)’, *The Conversation*, (online, 27 April 2026; also available on the RNZ website).

Associate Professor Guy Charlton, ‘[Evers pushes for constitutional amendment to end gerrymandering in Wisconsin](#)’, *WisPolitics* (online, 21 April 2026).

Associate Professor Guy Charlton, ‘[Despite Top-level Tensions, Strategic Mineral Cooperation Among Western Allies Is Quietly Deepening](#)’, *The Diplomat* (online, 14 March, 2026).

Dr Wellett Potter, ‘[Can you trademark identity? The new legal strategy celebrities are using against AI](#)’, *The Conversation* (online, 19 May 2026, 3.17pm AEST).

Dr Wellett Potter, interview with Spence Denny, *ABC Adelaide Evenings* (ABC Radio Adelaide, 19 May 2026), discussing celebrities’ use of trade mark law to protect aspects of their identity and brand in the age of artificial intelligence.

Dr Wellett Potter, interview with Kristy Reading, *ABC New England North West Breakfast* (ABC Radio New England North West, 29 April 2026), discussing Taylor Swift’s trade mark filings relating to voice and likeness, and the broader implications for the control and protection of identity in contemporary media and digital market.

Engagement and Events

Myall Creek Symposium

On Friday 5 June 2026, UNE hosted the Myall Creek Memorial Symposium at the Oorala Aboriginal Centre, a flagship event of Oorala's 40th anniversary year. Themed "Walking the talk together to build a better future," the symposium focused on concrete actions supporting truth-telling and reconciliation in the wake of the 1838 Myall Creek massacre - the first frontier massacre in which perpetrators were successfully prosecuted in a colonial court. Barrister Tony McAvoy SC, a Wirldi man and Australia's first Indigenous Senior Counsel, delivered the keynote address this year. The UNE School of Law is a key partner in this long-standing collaboration. School of Law staff involved included Dr Andrew Lawson, Director of UNE's AgLaw Research Hub and member of the Armidale Friends of Myall Creek, who was a major contributor to the symposium this year, and lecturer and barrister Karen Conte, who was one of the presenters. The symposium serves as a precursor to the annual memorial service held at the Myall Creek site near Bingara on Sunday 7 June 2026.



Real Life Practice of Law series: UNE Sydney campus

The *Real Life Practice of Law* series has now commenced in Parramatta at UNE's Sydney campus organised by Associate Professor Guy Charlton. The *Real Life Practice of Law* series brings practitioners to UNE's Sydney campus to share their insights about 'real life practice'. Students and staff may join online if they are not able to attend in person in Parramatta. The following sessions have taken place to date:

Session 1: Julia Tutt – Wills and Estates Practice, 14 April 2026

UNE alumna and former Duval College resident, Julia Tutt, spoke on careers in wills and estates law. Drawing on her experience as a Senior Associate with de Groot's Wills and Estate Lawyers, Julia provided attendees with an insight into the realities of specialist practice beyond the textbook. She discussed the diverse range of clients and matters encountered in wills and estates law, shared reflections on her career journey since graduating from UNE, and offered practical advice on building a rewarding legal career.

Session 2: Koreen Partridge – Property Law in Practice, 15 May 2026

An experienced property lawyer with extensive expertise in conveyancing and planning law, Koreen shared valuable insights into her work advising on residential, commercial and industrial property transactions, as well as commercial and retail leasing, retirement village contracts, strata matters, subdivisions and staged developments.

Drawing on her experience acting for property owners, developers, local councils, government agencies, public and private companies, Koreen highlighted the practical realities of property law and dispute resolution. She also discussed her work in proceedings before NCAT, the Land and Environment Court, and the Supreme Court, offering valuable perspectives on how property law operates in real-world projects and legal disputes.



UNE Open Day: Friday 1 May 2026

UNE had a wonderful Open Day, with more than 1300 prospective students registered to visit Armidale campus on Friday 1 May. Students travelled from more than 40 schools across NSW, and we also had students visit from as far north as Townsville and Rockhampton in Queensland.



Combined School of Law and School of Business morning tea: 13 May 2026

Members of the School of Law and the UNE Business School came together for a combined morning tea, providing staff from both schools with an opportunity to mingle and strengthen connections between the two Schools.



Belinda Eastgate, Senior Administrative Officer in the School of Law: celebrating 35 years at UNE!

The School of Law celebrated Belinda's 35 years at UNE over morning tea on Wednesday 15 April. Since commencing at UNE in 1991 in the CB Newling Centre, Belinda has worked across Education, Business, Faculty Administration, the Student Centre and, for the past 20 years in the School of Law. Throughout her career, Belinda has provided dedicated support to Heads of School and senior leadership, academic staff and students, contributing to many areas of university life while navigating significant organisational change. She reflects that the diversity of her work and the opportunity to support the UNE community have been among the most rewarding aspects of her career. Thank you Belinda for your 35 years of extraordinary service to UNE!



North and North West Community Legal Service

The School of Law continues to collaborate closely with the North and North West Community Legal Service (NNWCLS). Members of their team visited the Law School on 20 May for morning tea, and Law School staff also attended the NNWCLS's 30th anniversary celebration on 18 May (in Beardy St, Armidale).



UNE Law Forum, Armidale, 4 – 5 May 2026

UNE Law staff came together in Armidale and online to discuss a range of issues, including research, undergraduate and postgraduate teaching, student matters and academic integrity, international and Indigenous engagement, workload, staff recruitment, WHS matters, professional and community engagement, Academic Board, Convocation. The May Law Forum highlighted again the School's strong service and engagement culture across the many facets of University life.



Careers Expo

Associate Professor Guy Charlton represented UNE School of Law at the Careers Expo held at Randwick Racecourse on 28 - 30 May 2026.



Dr Wellett Potter visited Sacred Heart Central School on Friday 13 March assisting Year 10 students to prepare for their upcoming Mock Trial.

Dr Wellett Potter attended Sacred Heart Central School on Wednesday 13 May for the official opening of their primary classrooms and learning commons following extensive renovations. The event provided an opportunity to support the school community, acknowledge the significance of renewed educational facilities for students and staff, and strengthen UNE Law's ongoing connections with a regional school and community partner.

UNE Law Students' Society (LSS)

LSS Annual Law Ball

The University of New England Law Students' Society was delighted to present this year's annual Law Ball held on Saturday 2 May at the UNE campus in Armidale. Once again, the LSS supported BackTrack Youth Works. BackTrack is a charitable organisation based in Armidale, dedicated to supporting vulnerable youth who have fallen through the cracks. The Law Ball provides a wonderful opportunity for LSS members to engage with staff, students and guests. This year's guests included the Mayor of Armidale - Sam Coupland, and keynote speaker Judge Anderson SC of the District Court of NSW.



LSS Annual Conference

The UNE Law Students' Society held its second Annual Conference on 3–4 May at the UNE SMART Region Incubator and online, following its award-winning inaugural event last year which received the Academic Event of the Year at the 2025 UNE Life Awards. The free conference was themed 'Regional Practice' and featured a range of external and academic presenters.

Day 1 opened with Judge Anderson SC of the District Court of NSW discussing regional versus city practice, joined by his Associate and UNE graduate Victoria Vivente. Subsequent sessions included Ms Terri Coleman (North and North West Community Legal Service) on regional community legal centre work, Mr Paul Akon on regional legal practice and the Armidale Koori Court project, and Dr Andrew Lawson on the UNE Law Reform Institute proposal that emerged from the previous year's conference.

Day 2 featured a PLT information session by Mr Morton Herschderfer (The College of Law Australia), Associate Professor Dr Kyle Mulrooney on farm crime and the role of regional lawyers, Ms Patricia Vagg on regional access to justice, and Mr Cameron Cowley (Roberts + Morrow) offering practical advice for new solicitors. The conference reinforced UNE's commitment to regional legal practice and education.

